

Community and Public Relations



Introduction

The availability of library services and materials and the essential role libraries play in improving the quality of life should be conveyed on a continuous basis through a sustained public relations program. The community and public relations program should be both internal and external, reaching staff, trustees, volunteers, friends' groups, community leaders, as well as users and non-users of the library.

Standards

1. The library board, the director, and the staff communicate a positive image of the library and its services.
2. The library cooperates in local, regional, state, and national efforts to promote library services.
3. The library has a written public relations policy, available to the staff and the public, that addresses library services, programming, printed materials, library displays and exhibits, and statements to the media.

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Community and Public Relations Guidelines

Essential Guidelines

The library . . .

- Trains staff to be approachable when serving the public.
- Provides new staff orientation on customer relations and public service.
- Provides ongoing customer service training as needed.
- Maintains good contacts and working relationships with the local media.
- Encourages and supports staff and board involvement in community organizations and activities.
- Maintains contact with schools (including pre-schools), organizations, businesses, and government officials within the library's service area.
- Informs local newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations of the library's services and programs.
- Utilizes publications such as newsletters and booklists to reach individuals in the community.
- Provides outreach programs such as book talks, children's programs, media presentations, etc., in the community.
- Sponsors programs in the library such as art exhibits, lectures, demonstrations, etc.
- Informs agencies of library services, makes library available for meetings and cooperates with community organizations to sponsor programs that further mutual objectives.
- Serves as a center for community information, providing current information on educational opportunities, organizations, resources, and speakers.

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- Develops a Friends of the Library organization and encourages the Friends to be library advocates and work with library boards, staff, and the community to support library services.

Aspiring Guidelines

The library . . .

- Designates one staff member to coordinate public relations activities.
- Develops an annual public relations program and allocates funds for public relations activities.
- Assertively markets and publicizes library services
- Makes training programs available to the staff and the board that emphasize and develop positive public relations skills.
- Enables library representatives to join local service and business organizations.
- Encourages and enables library representatives to request/accept invitations to appear before groups and agencies to promote library services.
- Joins the local Chamber of Commerce and/or other service organizations.
- Develops a Friends of the Library organization and encourages the Friends to be library advocates and work with library boards, staff, and the community to promote library services.

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Excel Guidelines

The library . . .

- Has multiple staff members working on public relations activities.
- Develops a mailing list of key community leaders, interest groups, agencies, and organizations, and regularly sends them promotional materials.
- Pays initiation fees/dues for staff to join local service and business organizations.
- Encourages library representatives to serve on boards and chair committees of local organizations and professional associations.
- Uses new technologies in implementing the community relations program.
- Determines the level of the public's awareness of various library services every five years during the community study.
- Promotes staff visits to other organizations or businesses with recognized customer service programs.
- Encourages the Friends of the Library to conduct fund-raising projects in conjunction with the library administration.

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